

A  
 REVIEW  
 OF THE  
 STATE  
 OF THE  
 BRITISH NATION.

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Saturday, May 27. 1710.

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I Should not have taken up so much of my Time, and my Readers, as to make a whole Paper only upon this Affair of the Bakers, were it not that I think it is a thing very material to the Publick Peace, as well as to the Poor People of the Nation; and that I am willing to dispatch it, also, I think it may be needful, in order to prevent, and disappoint some People, who, *taking hold of every opportunity for the Publick disorder*, have pretended to promise themselves some Room for Mischief from this Trifle.

I think I need not say any more, to prove the Meaning of the Act of Parliament to be *not the striding up of the Magistrates*, to one Size or Denomination of our Loaves

of Bread, but to one exact Proportion of Weight, and Price in our Bread——

Proportion is what brings all the World to a Ballance—— *Every thing* bears some Proportion to *every thing*; this makes a Twelve-peny Loaf, or a Half-peck Loaf just the same, both to the Buyer and Seller, call them by what Names you will; and the difference between the several Sizes of Loaves, is just as much *as I said in my last*, *had it been Printed right*, as the difference there is in the length of the Ground between Aldgate and Ludgate, and the length of the Grolund, between Ludgate and Aldgate.

This would be the effect of exactly observing the Weight and Price of Bread,  
 set.

set down in the Act of Parliament.—  
But say some, this Weight and Price cannot be so well or exactly stated, as it is done in the City, by the Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen, and by the Justices of *Middlesex*; who keeping up to the Letter of the Act, and the Meaning both—Must certainly do the most Justice, and this is the Reason why they resolve to tie the People up to the Sizes of Twelve-penny Bread, &c. and not Half-pecks, &c.

If this were true, I could have indeed nothing to say; and if a Half-peck Loaf always of the same Weight, could not be rated in Price, as exactly as a Twelve-penny Loaf always of the same Price may be in Weight, the Argument were at an End: But if there is such a thing, as a Scale of Proportion in the World, then this thing cannot be true.

But what shall we say then, if, upon Examining the Assize of Bread published in London, and the Assize of Bread published in Westminster the very last Week, both the Price of Corn, and the Time being the same, the first by the Twelve-penny Loaf, the last by the Half-peck—It should appear that the Half-peck Assize, gives the Poor the Advantage—It this be so, there must be a Fraud or a Fault some where; either the Magistrates of the City of Westminster have cheated the Bakers, or some Body in London, has given leave to the City Bakers to Cheat the Poor; and 'tis not one Farthing different to me where it lies; let us examine the matter of Fact.

By the Assize of Bread set forth by the Bailiff of Westminster, &c. the 16th of May, 1710. The Order of which Court I have exactly Printed below, and by which the Loaves of Peck, Half-peck, &c. are allow'd: The Weight and Price is thus,

The Weight of the  
Half-Peck, Wheat } lb. oz. dr.  
Loaf, being 20 Penny } 9 00 00  
worth of Bread—is }

By the Assize of Bread set forth in London, by Order of the Lord Mayor and

Court of Aldermen, as it is taken from the Bills of Mortality, (and Reprinted in a Paper call'd the *British Mercury*) Dated May 17. 1710. being the very last Court Day.

An Eighteen-penny Loaf	}	lb.	oz.	dr.
was to weigh of Wheat-				
en Bread		7	07	03
A Two-penny Wheat	}	0	13	04
Loaf				

So that together 20 Penny-	}	8	04	07
worth of wheat Bread i				
Less than in Westminster		0	11	01
		9	03	00

The difference is plain,  
20 Pennyworth of Wheat Bread in Westminster, by Peck and Half-peck—  
is 11 oz. 1 dr. of Weight more than 20 Pennyworth of the same Wheat Bread in London, by the Twelve-penny Loaf.

Where this Error lies, I shall not undertake to determine; Pounds, Ounces, Drams, &c. in Weight, are the same in London as in Westminster, I think the Money does not differ—Wheat Bread, in the Sense of the Law, cannot differ; nor is the Westminster Bread clearer than that in London; for even of Wheat Bread, the Justices in Westminster have been so exact, that if it be not the best, they have made the Difference yet greater, by keeping up the Weight, and lowering the Price 2 d. in a Peck, as follows.

At a Court held for the City and Liberty of Westminster, May 16.

The Clause relating to Peck, Half-Peck, and Quartern Loaves.

Forasmuch as several of the Inhabitants of this City and Liberty have Petition'd for, and been accusom'd to, for the use of their Families, the sort of Wheat Bread, made up in Peck, Half-Peck, Quartern, and Half-quartern Loaves; and have found this sort of Bread more profitable to their Families: And this Court



*Court finding no inconvenience therein, doth hereby in pursuance of the said Act of Parliament, License and Allow the making and selling of the said several sorts of Bread, within the said City and Liberty, so as each Peck Loaf of the finest Sort, weighs full Eighteen Pounds, whilst the same is New, and be Sold (for the present) for 3 s. 4 d. And the Peck, Second Sort, for 3 s. 2 d. And the Half-Peck, Quartern, and Half-Quartern, proportionably thereto, both in Weight and Price.*

Now besides what I have formerly said on this Head, which indeed, without Consulting any Body, occur'd to me from the Reason of the thing, and purely upon reading the Words of the Act; I am glad to find my Opinion very happily confirm'd, by an Eminent Lawyer, whose Judgment no Man will doubt — and whose Opinion, as he was pleas'd to give it under his Hand to some Gentlemen, who thought it worth their while to have their Practice so confirm'd, I have here Publish'd, having it sent me by an unknown Hand, I suppose for 'har purpose.

*I am of Opinion, the Table of the Act was intended, to settle the Price and Weights of all Bread to be b'll'd, by the common Bakers, to rise and fall, according to the Price of Corn; and the Bread therein mention'd of Penny, Two-penny, Six-penny, Twelve-penny and Eighteen-penny Loaves, were included only as Instances, for Governing the Magistrates, in setting the Assize, but not to restrain the Bakers from making Loaves of greater or lesser Value, the Weights thereof being according to the Proportion of these Instances; and the Justices of the Peace, may allow the making thereof, and may also allow the making other sorts of Bread than White, Wheaten, and Household, settling the Price and Weight accordingly.*

Sig'd,

Ed. Northey.

May 9. 1710.

I think nothing can be plainer — And to justify even this Opinion, as well as all I have said of this Matter, let any Man but look into the Act — Can any Man be so Blind as to say, that no sort of Bread is to be made but White, Wheaten, or Household, when the Act is so plain to the contrary? The Words are these,

*No Person or Persons, shall make for Sale, Sell, or expose to Sale, any sort or sorts of Bread, other than the several sorts of Bread herein after mention'd, this is to say White, Wheaten, and Household — (Mark this) And such other sort and sorts of Bread, as shall be publicly Licensed, and allow'd, by the said Chief Magistrates, &c.*

Again, take the Words of the Act, for the Assize of the Loaves.

*And the Assize and Weight of the said Bread, shall be ACCORDING TO (Mark that Word) the Table here after following.*

Pray then what is the Meaning of the Word ACCORDING TO? This According to, in our Language, does never mean Literally and Numerically the same, but AGREEING WITH; I am asham'd to think, any Gentlemen who have the Characters this Act mentions, and to whom such Power is given, as is by this Act, should need that any such Explication should be made to them; without doubt the Act suppos'd all our Magistrates to be what all our Magistrates ought to be, and what I would be glad to hope they are, and should be very sorry if they are not, I mean Men of Sense, as well as Men of Honesty — For certainly this Law has put the Properties of the Subject, as well the Baker, as the Buyer of Bread, more absolutely in the Power of the Magistrate, than has often been done; and this leads me to the Complaint I made before, viz. That there seems to be this Hardship upon the Baker in the Act, that it may not in some respect be possible for him to avoid the Offence.

Not the least Room is allow'd for Accidents, not the least Abatement of Circumstances,

stances, no Allowance for the Staleness of Bread——A *Dram Weight* wanting, be the Bread New or three Days Stale, hard bak'd or soft, 'tis the same thing; a *Dram weight* wanting, Entitles the Informer to the Penalty, and leaves the Baker at Mercy.

I confess, it seems to me to have been a little differing from the usual Way of Acts of Parliament, and which I doubt not will be hereafter Regulated——Had the Buyer been oblig'd to see his Bread weigh'd at the Bakers Shop, or the Bakers, who carry their Bread out, been oblig'd to carry Scales with them, and to Weigh their Bread, and upon all deficiency to have leave to make it up, either in Bread, or by Abatement of Price——Then it had been but just, if the Baker had sold less Weight than was due, to punish him severely——But to fetch a Loaf hot out of the Oven, take it home, keep it two Days, or near three, and then come and say it is not Weight——When at the same time, if it really was Weight from the Oven, it may lose, or if it was not Weight from the Oven, the Baker could not possibly avoid it, and if demanded at the time of Buying, might have made it up; this I say is a hardship, may soon put an end to the Trade of a Baker, and we may have Ovens enough to Lett, in a few Months: But I doubt not some Medium may be found out, to reconcile this, and all other Inconveniencies of this kind, in another Parliament.

Mean Time, I see nothing in all the difficulties before us, and that have occasion'd so much Clamour, if the Magistrates will but use the Authority they have, to let the Bakers make such size of Bread, as the People desire, have been used to, understand, and as really are most, to the Advantage of their Families——If this may not be had, we must have Patience till another Parliament, when the same

Authority that has made this Law, may better explain it.

*And so much for the Bakers.*

## ERRATA.

Review N<sup>o</sup> 21. p. 78. Col. 1. l. 26. for *Protection*, read *Proclamation*. Review N. 22. p. 82. col. 2. l. 27. for *Punished*, r. *Publis'd*; ib. l. 29. r. *To the Queen de Facto's*. Rev. N. 24. p. 50. col. 2. l. 27, 28. *Professor*, r. *Possessor*; ib. l. 50. dele *whst.* p. 91. col. 2. l. 20. r. *to die for it*; ib. l. ult. r. *Maria*.

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N. B. His Mother, the Widow of the late Mr. Christopher Bartlett, lives at his House in Goodman's-Fields, and is very skilful in the Business to those of her own Sex.

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